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weeds that check his progress; of the rust, smut and mildew which attack his cereals; of the cause, yet to be discovered, of the rot in the potato; of the mutual adaptation of the plants to the soil; of their special habits and natural structure, their increase and decrease in various localities.

The sections of Zoology and Animal Physiology embraces, by your classification, domestic animals and their commercial value, their various breeds, the rearing of stock, and it, perhaps, properly includes the agency of animal life in fertilizing the soil. That on Commerce relates to the transport and exports of bread-stuffs, and their relation to our foreign exchanges; that on Manufactures to our agricultural implements, enlarging our production by diminishing the necessity for human labor; and that on Finance, to our national wealth, of which agriculture is the most prominent feature.

We began, gentlemen, by recognizing in agriculture the largest material interest of our country, constituting the bulk of her wealth, and indicating, in no small degree, the physical comfort, the prosperity, and the civilization of our people.

We next considered its relation to less favored foreign lands, whose children look to us for food:—a relation that invests the quiet labors of our farmers with an interest beyond the seas, not simply in shaping commercial speculation, and regulating among merchants the price of bread, but in gladdening distant homes, in staying the march of famine and starvation, in allaying popular discontent, and even averting national revolutions.

After a survey of the area, the population, the products, and the statistics of our great American farm, of its home resources, its foreign markets, and its probable future, we close with the thought, that for the advancement of this great interest, which supplies millions with healthful and profitable employment, and other millions with their daily bread; canals and railroads intersect our continent, extending westward towards the far Pacific; ships whiten the ocean, and steam labors in a thousand forms. That to supply its workmen with fitting implements, inventive genius is ever wakeful, and mechanical skill unceasingly active. That in their behalf chemistry, by the crucible and analysis, is extorting from nature her hidden secrets; and science, in all her forms, is lending her skillful aid to perfect, in this advanced and advancing age, the art that was born with the creation, in the garden that was given to man to dress and to keep it.

We close with the thought, suggestive of thankfulness and good will, that all these agencies are at work for the benefit of our universal brotherhood, to lighten the primeval curse, and to compel from our common mother, for the benefit of the children of a common father, more varied and abundant harvests, with greater certainty and with lessened toil.

Let us reverently remember, gentlemen, in our study of the laws of Political Economy by the guiding light of Statistics, that the truths which we seek to discover, are a part of that universal law whose seat is the bosom of God, and whose voice the harmony of the world.

Nor let us ever forget, in the contemplation of our unparalleled blessings, that the happiness and prosperity of a nation depends infinitely less on their material wealth, than upon the observance of those great rights and duties which our fathers solemnly recognized when we took our place in the family of nations.

ON THE MANNER OF TAKING A CENSUS.

*To the Committee of Publication
of the Am. Geo. and Stat. Society:*

GENTLEMEN,—I propose herewith to communicate some of the results of my observation upon the difficulties to be encountered in taking a census of the population, and the statistics required by law to be obtained therewith. Having had the principal care of preparing the blanks and instructions, and of answering letters of inquiry, from the marshals appointed for taking the census of the State of New York in 1855, and the entire direction of the labor of preparing the returns of that census for publication, I could not fail of meeting with many of the difficulties that must attend every enterprise of this kind, and in a greater or less degree impair the accuracy of its results.

It is obvious that the preparation of the summaries and abstracts embodying these results, involves no source of error which is not under control; and that, with suitable precautions, and careful checks and revisions, no errors need to arise in this part of the labor. To secure accuracy in this service, it should be performed by competent persons under one general direction, and with uniform instructions for settling the various points of difficulty that are liable to arise. I am convinced that labor saving

methods may to a considerable degree be introduced, to facilitate this branch of the service, and that simple mechanical appliances may be used to advantage to expedite the work.

Our principal care must therefore be, to obtain correct returns from the marshals; and, omitting for the present, any discussion as to what these returns should embrace, I will limit this letter to a statement of what appear to be inherent, and, to some extent, unavoidable difficulties, that will be found attending this all-important duty. There can be no doubt but that the census takers have been overcharged with duties that might better be performed by other persons, and in a different way. There is not an inquiry they are required to make, which is not important in its place, or which is not useful to the legislator, and of value to the statistician and the civil economist. But when we add to the minute inquiries of personal statistics, the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, for the year or the ten years previous—the minute statistics of agriculture and manufactures, in their immense combinations and details—statistics of dwellings—of churches and religious societies—of schools and school-houses—of newspapers and periodicals—and of such new points of inquiry as each succeeding census has had appended to its schedules, it will not be deemed amiss to rank as first on the list of desiderata, a high degree of qualification on the part of those charged with making the enumeration. As these persons are not in all cases selected from any peculiar fitness they are thought to possess, it will sometimes happen that they will fail to appreciate, or neglect to perform some part of their duties, and their returns will show palpable deficiencies in some one or more particulars.

These defects are perhaps due less to the census marshals than to the law; and while I would not abridge, but rather extend, our facilities for obtaining full statistics upon the points last enumerated, I would deem it a subject worthy of grave consideration, whether we might not devise some more direct and appro-

priate method of arriving at these desirable results. In the best European systems, the personal census is made a distinct and independent branch of inquiry, and in our own country it will generally be found that this portion has received the most attention, as if it had been regarded the primary object, while the remaining inquiries had been considered as incidentally, and more or less remotely, connected with it.

As we multiply inquiries upon collateral subjects, we necessarily extend the time required by each enumerator for the performance of his duties, and consequently admit into every department, the errors incident to changes and removals, by which the proper persons cannot be found to answer the questions required. Lapse of time will also impair the memory of many persons, and the precision of the returns will be found invariably to bear an inverse ratio to the interval within which the enumeration is made. The nearer we approach a point of time, the greater will be the chances of success, and not until the census is taken upon one day, can we hope to secure everything desirable in point of accuracy.

Another source of error will be found in the want of a uniform knowledge of their duties by the census marshals, or a misconception of the intention of the several columns of the schedules. This error is always more liable to occur in the collateral inquiries, than in those relating to the population. Two persons might, for example, report a very unequal amount of improved and unimproved land in the same district, by one including and the other rejecting from the column of improved land, a natural meadow or marsh, which was partly available for tillage. This liability to error can only be remedied by very minute and carefully prepared instructions, fully indexed and conveniently arranged for reference. In many instances, the persons charged with taking the census might be previously convened, the plan and intentions of the schedules explained by some person thoroughly informed, their principles discussed and questions upon doubtful points answered. I consider this measure fully

applicable to a State census, and should not hesitate to urge its adoption, whenever sufficient numbers of the enumerators could be assembled. A single evening, thus spent in mutual discussion, would do much towards preparing these officers for an intelligent and uniform discharge of their duties, and enable them to *commence* their labors, with a fuller appreciation of the subject than they might, under other circumstances, *cul* them. From the short period devoted to obtaining the census, a person has no chance of acquiring that facility for the transaction of the business that grows out of long experience and habitual application, as we constantly see in other pursuits of life;—and from the long interval that occurs between two enumerations, it can scarcely be expected that the experience acquired upon one census will be to any extent available in the next. We must therefore depend upon preliminary instruction, of the kind above alluded to, for anything we have to expect, beyond the ordinary sagacity and intelligence of the officers charged with the duty of collecting these statistics.

It is not probable that the census marshals will generally inform themselves of the varied deductions which may arise from their labors, or even that those who have given the subject the careful study of years, can fully realize the beautiful generalizations that may grow out of these facts, when they shall have accumulated through a long series of years; for when the tables of a census lose their interests as charts of existing society, they become pages of history and landmarks of progress.

Yours, respectfully,

FRANKLIN B. HOUGH.

ALBANY, Feb. 17, 1859.

RAIN-BASINS OF PENNSYLVANIA.

	Basins.	Sq. M.	Sq. M.
Atlantic.	Delaware River	3,895	6,499
	Schuylkill	1,884	
	Brandywine	720	
	Susquehanna River	17,018	20,446
	Juniata	3,428	
Gulf of Mexico.	Potomac River	1,581	1,581
	Ohio River—		
	Alleghany	9,546	15,432
	Monongahela	2,800	
	Beaver	3,086	
St. Lawrence.	Lake Erie	352	352
	Lake Ontario (Genesee)	90	
Total		44,400	44,400

STATISTICS OF AMERICAN STATES.

NO. 3.

REPUBLIC OF BUENOS-AYRES.

Lat. 33° 19' to 41° 12' S. | Population (1855,) 303,355.
Long. 56° 13' to 70° 57' W. | Density, 1.03 to sq. mile.
Area, 294,000 sq. miles. | Capital, BUENOS-AYRES.

GOVERNMENT.

Executive.—Governor and Captain-General, elected for three years.

Administration.—1. Minister of the Interior and foreign affairs; 2. Minister of War and Marine; and, 3. Minister of Finance.

Legislature.—A Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Assembles annually.

Judiciary.—A Supreme Court of Appeals, 3 District Courts, &c.

National Religion.—The Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic. The Church is under the immediate superintendence of the Bishop of Buenos Ayres.

POPULATION, (1856.)

Northern District	53,344
Western "	66,134
Southern "	82,877
Total rural population	202,355
City of Buenos Ayres	101,000
Total civic and rural population	303,355

NATIONAL FORCES.

Army, (on the peace establishment.)—Infantry, cavalry and artillery, 6,370 men.

National Guard.—About 30,000 men.

Navy.—3 steamers, 2 corvettes, and 4 other small vessels.

PUBLIC FINANCE.

<i>Revenue</i> —Receipts (1857)	82,105,211 pesos.
viz., Import duties	60,487,896
Export duties	9,525,053
Direct taxes ..	2,653,908
Other sources ..	9,438,354
—Expenditures (1857)	79,800,392 pesos.
<i>Public Debt</i> —Interior (bearing interest) ..	18,500,000
Paper in circulation	105,000,000
Total (in paper money) ..	123,500,000
" —Foreign	£1,750,000 sterling.
(20 paper=1 silver.)	

LIVE STOCK IN THE STATE, (1856.)

Cattle	4,502,090 head.
Horses	2,196,663 "
Sheep	7,966,725 "